juriba

Don't Start Your EUC Desktop Strategy With A Platform Decision

VDI vs AVD vs Windows 365

How Digital Workplace Leaders Design Desktop Strategy in 2026

Why the real challenge is not choosing a platform.

The Debate That Won't Die

Every End-User Computing (EUC) strategy discussion often lands in the same place: **VDI vs AVD vs Windows 365**. Which platform should we standardise on? Which vendor should we commit to? Which architecture will serve us best over the next five years?

But this debate is increasingly **the wrong starting point**. Organisations that anchor their desktop strategy around platform selection are asking a second-order question, and too often missing the first-order problem entirely.

juriba

Why Organisations Are Re-Evaluating VDI in 2026

The assumptions behind many VDI estates were designed for a different era.

Today the environment has changed:

• hybrid work is permanent
• cloud desktop platforms have matured
• application estates have expanded
• OS and application change cycles are accelerating
• infrastructure costs are under pressure

VDI still solves important problems, but it is **no longer the default desktop model**.

juriba

The Reality of Enterprise EUC

Most large enterprises do not run a single, standardised desktop delivery model. They never did — and in 2026, they almost certainly never will. The modern desktop estate is **multi-platform by default**.

Physical Devices

Mobility, offline access, and field workers who cannot tolerate latency or connectivity dependency.

VDI

Secure, controlled environments for regulated operations, sensitive workloads, and GPU-intensive tasks.

Azure Virtual Desktop

Elastic pooled desktops for shared-resource users, call centres, and seasonal demand spikes.

Windows 365

Persistent cloud desktops for contractors, offshore teams, and users who need a fixed, consistent environment.

juriba

The Desktop Platform Decision Criteria

How EUC Leaders Actually Evaluate VDI, AVD and Windows 365

Desktop platform selection is not a feature comparison. It is a **multi-dimensional technical decision** that spans workload characteristics, application complexity, security constraints, infrastructure strategy, and operational model maturity. The "best" platform is the one that fits the **intersection of these constraints,** not the one with the longest feature list.

User & Workload

Task-based vs. knowledge worker vs. developer; concurrency; session persistence; mobility and offline access

Application Requirements

OS compatibility, packaging format (MSI/MSIX/App-V), latency sensitivity, GPU compute, identity dependencies

Security & Compliance

Data residency, workload isolation, privileged access, regulated environments, audit and control requirements

Infrastructure & Cloud

Azure maturity, existing VDI estate, network latency, global footprint, Entra ID / hybrid AD architecture

Operational Model

Image management capability, application lifecycle maturity, support tooling, and automation capability

No single criterion determines the right platform. The evaluation must be holistic, the intersection of all five dimensions drives the decision.

juriba

Mapping Criteria to Platform Choice

Where VDI, AVD and Windows 365 Actually Fit

Each platform has a natural fit defined by the workload, user pattern, application complexity, and operational overhead it best supports. Understanding these boundaries prevents costly misalignment between platform capability and business need.

Criteria	VDI	AVD	Windows 365
Workload Type	High control / specialised	Elastic / pooled	Persistent 1:1
User Pattern	Static / predictable	Variable / shared	Individual / consistent
App Complexity	High / legacy-heavy	Medium–high	Low–medium
GPU / Compute	Strong	Moderate	Limited
Security / Isolation	Very high	High	Medium
Operational Overhead	High	Medium	Low
Cost Model	CapEx / fixed	Consumption	Per-user fixed

Key Technical Insight

No single platform satisfies all criteria across an enterprise. This is precisely why most organisations adopt a **hybrid model,** aligning each platform to the workloads and users it serves best.

What This Means for Architecture

Architects must resist the urge to standardise on a single platform prematurely. Forcing all workloads onto one platform creates technical debt, increases operational risk, and often fails to meet security or compliance requirements for regulated workloads.

juriba

The Real Constraint on Platform Decisions

Why Platform Strategy Is Often Limited by Applications

Even when criteria are clearly defined and platform fit is well understood, real-world platform decisions are routinely **constrained by application readiness**, not infrastructure capability. The application estate is the hidden limiting factor in almost every EUC transformation.

The Application Reality

→ **Legacy OS Dependency**

Applications tied to specific Windows versions or 32-bit runtimes cannot move freely between platforms without remediation.

→ **Packaging Complexity**

Inconsistent packaging formats (MSI, EXE, App-V, MSIX), unknown dependencies, and lack of application ownership block migration.

→ **Testing Gaps**

Incomplete regression testing standards mean compatibility risks cannot be assessed or mitigated with confidence.

Practical Consequences

AVD migrations stall

Workloads with complex legacy applications cannot be moved without significant re-engineering effort.

Windows 365 scope narrows

Users with deep application dependencies cannot be placed on simplified persistent cloud PC models.

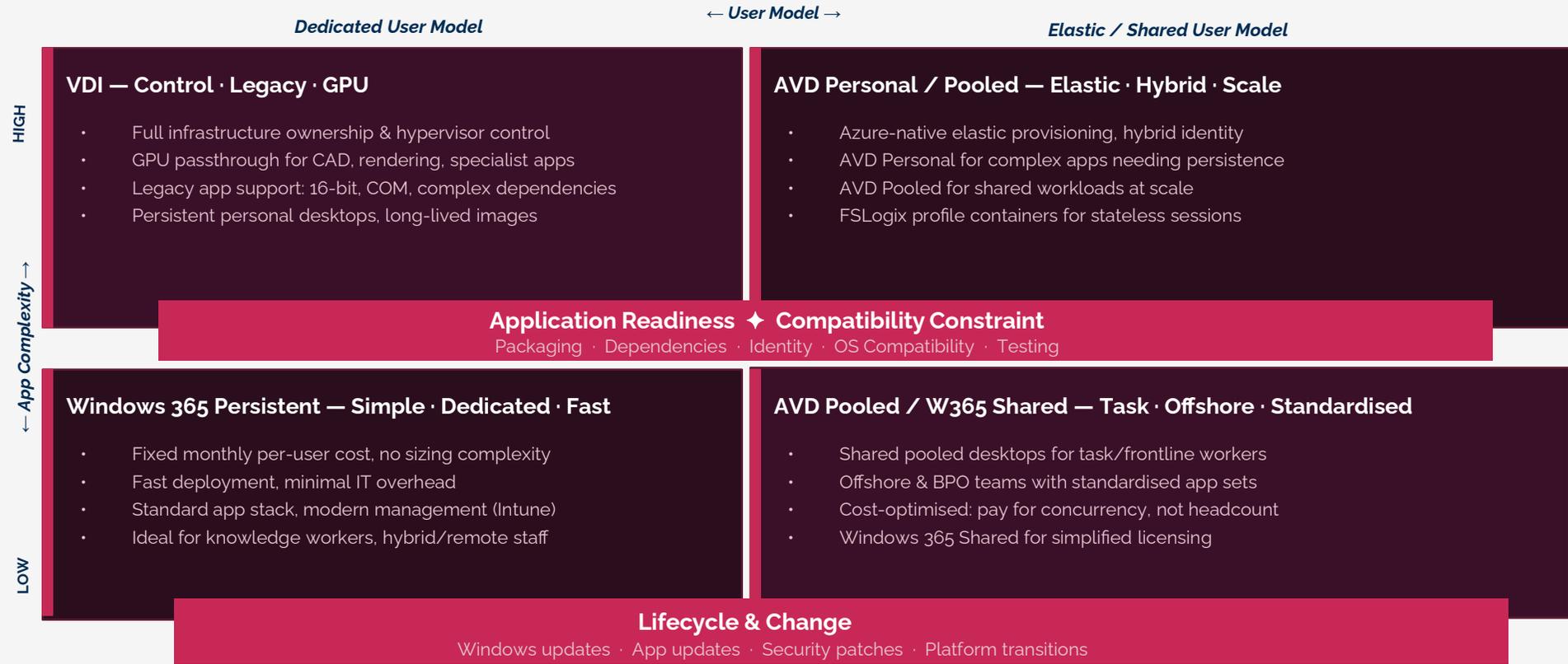**VDI persists beyond plan**

Organisations maintain on-premises VDI longer than intended because applications are not ready to move.

Platform strategy is not determined by infrastructure. It is determined by application readiness and lifecycle capability. This is the most underestimated constraint in EUC platform planning.

juriba

The EUC Platform Decision Map 2026

How enterprises really decide between VDI, AVD and Windows 365

Platform decisions are constrained by **application readiness & lifecycle complexity**

← User Model →

Dedicated User Model — *Elastic / Shared User Model*

HIGH

← App Complexity →

LOW

VDI — Control · Legacy · GPU

- Full infrastructure ownership & hypervisor control
- GPU passthrough for CAD, rendering, specialist apps
- Legacy app support: 16-bit, COM, complex dependencies
- Persistent personal desktops, long-lived images

AVD Personal / Pooled — Elastic · Hybrid · Scale

- Azure-native elastic provisioning, hybrid identity
- AVD Personal for complex apps needing persistence
- AVD Pooled for shared workloads at scale
- FSLogix profile containers for stateless sessions

Application Readiness ✦ Compatibility Constraint
Packaging · Dependencies · Identity · OS Compatibility · Testing

Windows 365 Persistent — Simple · Dedicated · Fast

- Fixed monthly per-user cost, no sizing complexity
- Fast deployment, minimal IT overhead
- Standard app stack, modern management (Intune)
- Ideal for knowledge workers, hybrid/remote staff

AVD Pooled / W365 Shared — Task · Offshore · Standardised

- Shared pooled desktops for task/frontline workers
- Offshore & BPO teams with standardised app sets
- Cost-optimised: pay for concurrency, not headcount
- Windows 365 Shared for simplified licensing

Lifecycle & Change
Windows updates · App updates · Security patches · Platform transitions

The Central Constraint

Platform decisions are rarely limited by infrastructure capability. They are constrained by **application readiness and lifecycle complexity,** a layer that cuts across every quadrant of this matrix.

The Orchestration Challenge

The challenge is not choosing a platform. It is **orchestrating applications and change across all of them** simultaneously, managing Windows updates, application lifecycles, security patches, and platform transitions in a coordinated, risk-aware programme.

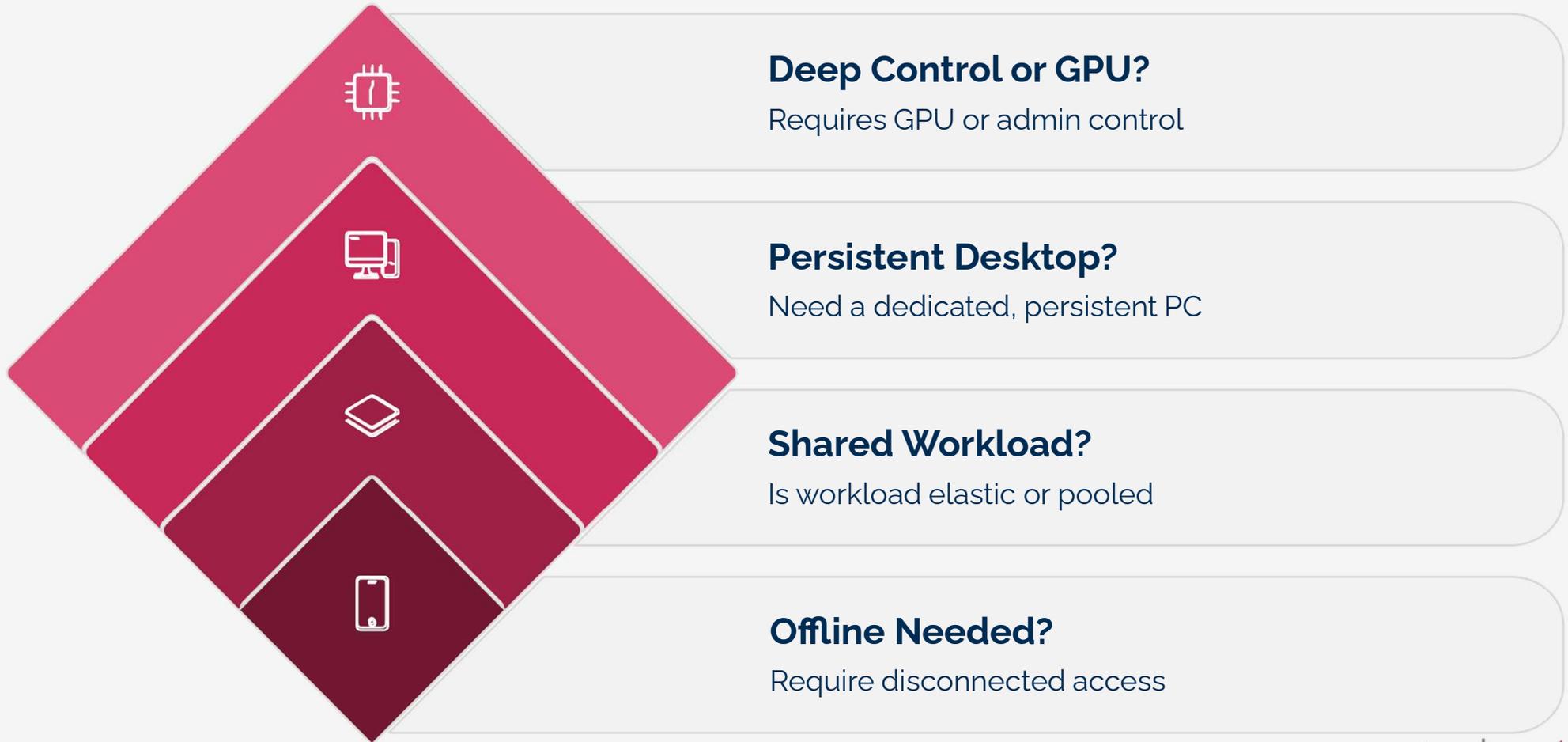**Every desktop platform decision is ultimately an application decision.**

juriba

Platform Strengths at a Glance

Each platform has a clear purpose. The strategic challenge is not selecting one, it is knowing when to deploy each. There is **no universal platform**. Only the right platform for the right workload.

Platform	Best For	Key Characteristic
VDI	Security, control, GPU workloads	Deep infrastructure control, on-premises or hosted
Azure Virtual Desktop	Elastic pooled desktops	Scales dynamically with demand, cost-efficient for shared use
Windows 365	Persistent cloud desktops	Fixed monthly cost, always-on, user-owned experience
Physical Devices	Mobility and offline work	Full offline capability, highest end-user autonomy

juriba

The Desktop Decision Tree

Leading organisations do not choose platforms by committee preference or vendor relationship. They follow a structured, **workload-driven decision process** that maps user requirements to the most appropriate delivery model.

Deep Control or GPU?
Requires GPU or admin control

Persistent Desktop?
Need a dedicated, persistent PC

Shared Workload?
Is workload elastic or pooled

Offline Needed?
Require disconnected access

juriba

Desktop decisions are **workload-driven**, not infrastructure-driven. The platform follows the requirement, not the other way around.
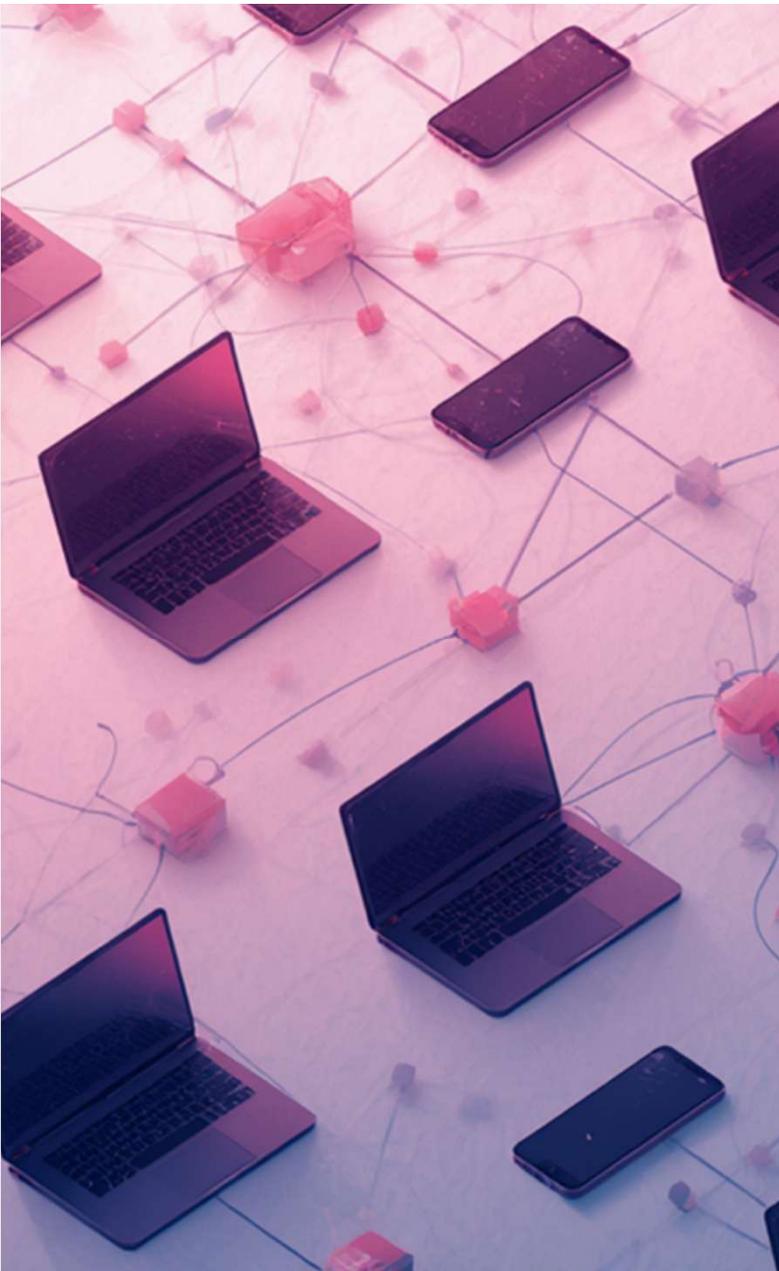
The Persona Reality

In practice, most large enterprises end up with **4 to 12 distinct user personas,** each with different workload profiles, mobility needs, compliance requirements, and application dependencies. Desktop strategy, at this level of maturity, becomes **persona-based architecture**.

1

Developers

Physical devices — high performance, local toolchain, offline capability essential.

2

Call Centre

AVD pooled — elastic capacity, shared resources, managed from centre.

3

Contractors

Windows 365 — persistent, isolated, consistent regardless of device or location.

4

Regulated Ops

VDI — maximum control, auditability, and security boundary enforcement.

juriba

The Hidden Constraint

Most EUC strategies are designed as if infrastructure is the binding constraint, the platform decision, the cloud architecture, the network topology.

It isn't.

The real constraint, the one that causes projects to stall, timelines to slip, and budgets to overrun, is **applications**.

Platform readiness means nothing if the application estate is not ready to move with it.

juriba

The Application Estate Problem

Across large enterprises, the application estate is rarely as well-governed as IT leaders assume. The data, when it is gathered, is consistently sobering.

43%
Unmanaged Applications
A significant portion of the estate operates outside formal IT governance.

(Juriba State of the Nation Survey 2025)

Unknown
Application Owners
For many applications, no accountable owner can be identified within the business.

Unclear
Compatibility Risk
Compatibility against new platforms or OS versions has not been assessed.

Varied
Packaging Standards
Inconsistent packaging practices make remediation slow and costly.

This is why EUC or digital workplace change initiatives stall, not because the infrastructure team is unprepared, but because the application estate is **not ready to move**.

juriba

Why EUC Changes Fail

Infrastructure teams deliver. Application estates do not. It is one of the most consistent patterns in enterprise EUC, what begins as a platform migration becomes an **application remediation programme**.

→ **Late Discovery**

Application compatibility issues surface deep into the project — when remediation is most expensive and most disruptive.

→ **Unclear Ownership**

No accountable owner means no one can approve changes, prioritise testing, or sign off readiness.

→ **Packaging Backlogs**

Repackaging queues explode as the volume of incompatible applications exceeds team capacity.

→ **Incomplete Readiness Data**

Without a reliable application inventory, go/no-go decisions are made on assumption rather than evidence.
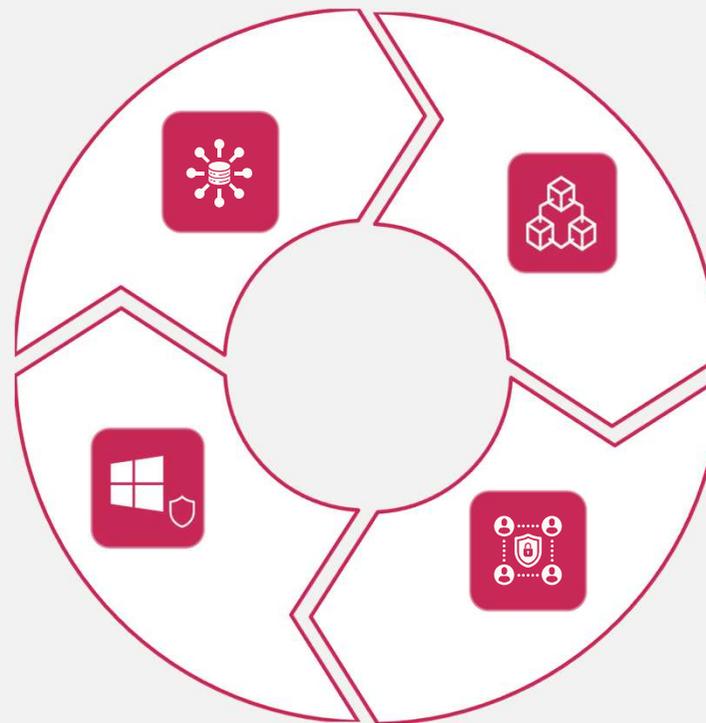
The Lifecycle Reality

Even when applications are ready and platforms are deployed, the work does not stop. Desktop environments **never stop changing**, and the pace of change is accelerating.

Windows Feature Updates

Annual OS releases require application compatibility validation at scale.

Application Updates

Continuous vendor releases require testing, packaging, and controlled deployment.

Platform Migrations

New persona requirements, cloud expansion, and platform evolution drive continuous architectural change.
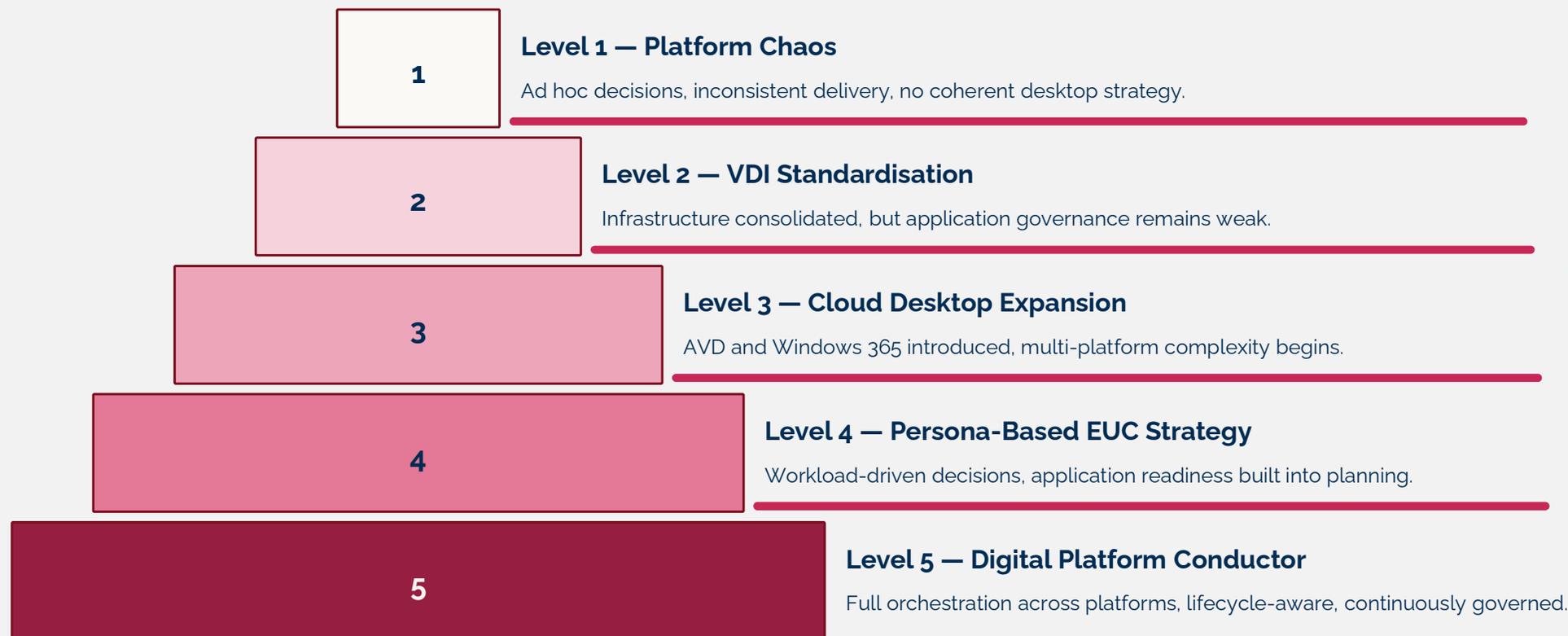
Security Patches

Monthly patch cycles demand rapid validation without compromising application stability.

EUC is no longer a migration project. It is a **continuous change programme,** and it demands a fundamentally different operating model.

juriba

The EUC Maturity Model

Organisations do not arrive at mature desktop strategy overnight. They move through recognisable stages — and understanding where you sit is the first step to planning where you need to go. **Most enterprises today sit between Level 2 and Level 3.**

1

Level 1 — Platform Chaos

Ad hoc decisions, inconsistent delivery, no coherent desktop strategy.

2

Level 2 — VDI Standardisation

Infrastructure consolidated, but application governance remains weak.

3

Level 3 — Cloud Desktop Expansion

AVD and Windows 365 introduced, multi-platform complexity begins.

4

Level 4 — Persona-Based EUC Strategy

Workload-driven decisions, application readiness built into planning.

5

Level 5 — Digital Platform Conductor

Full orchestration across platforms, lifecycle-aware, continuously governed.

juriba

Infrastructure Standardisation

Early EUC strategies were centred on consolidating infrastructure — rationalising physical hardware, standardising images, and reducing the number of delivery platforms in use.

The platform *was* the strategy.

Application Orchestration

Modern EUC strategies are defined by their ability to manage the application estate across multiple platforms — continuously, at scale, with full visibility and control.

Infrastructure becomes **a delivery layer**. Applications drive the strategy.

juriba

The Modern EUC Decision Framework

Leading organisations have moved beyond platform debates. They build their desktop strategy on five structured inputs, each of which informs the others and feeds into a continuously evolving approach.

01

Persona Segmentation

Define distinct user populations by workload profile, mobility need, compliance requirement, and application dependency.

02

Application Readiness Insight

Establish a real-time view of application compatibility, ownership, and packaging status across the estate.

03

Platform Cost Modelling

Model total cost of ownership across delivery platforms by persona — not by infrastructure preference.

04

Lifecycle Change Planning

Build a structured cadence for OS updates, application releases, and security patches that does not destabilise the environment.

05

Cross-Platform Orchestration

Coordinate deployment, testing, and change management across all platforms from a single operational layer.

juriba

The Missing Capability

When organisations audit their EUC capability honestly, a consistent gap emerges. The infrastructure is often in reasonable shape. The **orchestration layer is missing**. Without it, even well-chosen platforms cannot deliver.

Application Estate Visibility

A complete, accurate, and continuously maintained view of every application in use — across all platforms and personas.

Compatibility Intelligence

Automated insight into application compatibility risk against platform changes — before they reach production.

Ownership Accountability

Clear, enforced accountability for every application — enabling fast, confident decision-making during change programmes.

Cross-Platform Orchestration

A single operational layer that coordinates change across VDI, AVD, Windows 365, and physical endpoints simultaneously.

Without this capability, platform choice **does not solve the problem**. It simply moves it to a different location.

juriba

A Multi-Platform Workplace Needs a Digital Platform Conductor

The organisations that will lead in EUC through 2026 and beyond are not those who have made the cleverest platform choice. They are those who have built — or adopted — the capability to **orchestrate their entire digital workplace** as a coherent, continuously governed system.

Understand the Application Estate

Full visibility across all platforms — ownership, compatibility, packaging status, and change history.

Prepare Applications for Change

Proactive readiness assessment so that compatibility issues are resolved before they become programme blockers.

Orchestrate Platform Transitions

Coordinate migrations, persona changes, and platform expansions across the full estate — without disruption.

Manage Lifecycle Risk

A continuous, structured approach to OS updates, application releases, and security patching — at enterprise scale.

juriba

A Digital Platform Conductor Gives You

Our customers have informed us of the following incremental benefits of a DPC platform in their Enterprise Business

50-65% faster from plan to done

Significantly reduce the time it takes from conception to completion for your IT project.

~80% fewer helpdesk tickets

Significantly decrease your helpdesk tickets across your organization.

On-time delivery at scale

Whether you have 5,000 or 250,000+ devices, finish your IT project or transformation on time and transition to BAU for ongoing efficiency.

nationwide   Morgan Stanley   GSK   Lilly   Provincial Health Services Authority — Province-wide solutions. Better health.

juriba

Join Juriba's customer base today

Juriba: Built for IT People, by IT People.

Our Customers Ask Us

It is no longer:

"Which desktop platform should we choose?"

It is:

"How do we manage applications and change across multiple desktop platforms safely and continuously?"

That challenge requires:
- application estate visibility
- compatibility intelligence
- lifecycle orchestration

This is the role of Juriba's **Digital Platform Conductor**.

juriba

About Juriba

At Juriba, we help some of the world's largest and most complex organisations orchestrate digital workplace change with confidence.

Our platform combines **Digital Platform Conductor (DPC)** and **Windows App Management** to provide global, highly regulated enterprises with a single system of record and execution for application readiness, application lifecycle management, device and OS migrations, and continuous change.

Designed for scale, governance, and auditability, Juriba replaces fragmented tools and spreadsheets with automated workflows, real-time insight, and policy-driven control across End User Computing and application management.

Trusted by global enterprises operating across multiple regions, regulatory frameworks, and millions of endpoints, we reduce risk, increase delivery certainty, and enable IT teams to operate with confidence at scale.

Because change is constant and IT is the engine that powers the organisation, it must be executed correctly, with the end user in mind.

Juriba: Built for IT people, by IT people

Learn More About
Juriba's Digital Platform Conductor (DPC)

Visit: www.juriba.com